or till the next normal year whichever is earlier. This relief is to be extended on the merits of each case.

(ii) Banks should not charge penal interest nor should they compound the interest. Banks should also ensure that in the case of short term loans, the total interest payable by small and marginal farmers does not exceed the principal.

(iii) Banks should stop auctioning of gold ornaments pledged with them. Such action should be taken only as a last resort when all other avenues for recovery of dues have failed and that too after obtaining clearance from higher levels in each case.

(iv) Banks may extend consumption loan facilities upto Rs. 500/- per family.

(v) Banks should sanction loans for allied activities like dairy, poultry, etc. to the affected farmers when demanded.

Transfer of Office Bearers of Regional Rural Bank Employees Association

968. SHRI ASHIS SEN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what are the reasons for which the Chairman of Kapurthala-Ferozpur Kshetriya Gramin Bank issued transfer orders on the functonaries of the Association of the employees of the Bank soon after the formation of the Association which is a legitimate right of the employees; and

(b) what action Government propose to take against such unfair labour practice and restrain the Chairman of the Bank?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI ANIL SHASTRI): (a) The Chairman, Kapurthala-Ferozpur Kshetriya Gramin Bank has reported that the transfer of the emploees of the Bank including the functionaries of the staff union/association have been made purely on administrative grounds and for no other reasons.

(b) Does not arise.

Protection of Jute Industry

969. SHRI MOHAMMED AMIN: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be please to state:

(a) what steps Government propose to take to protect the jute industry;

(b) what is the number of units producing synthetic packaging materails all over the country; and

(c) what is the number of workers and the amount of capital invests in such synthetic packaging industry?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRY (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) A statement indicating steps taken by the Government to protect the jute industry is enclosed. (*See* below)

(b) and (c) There are around 500 synthetic units spread all over the country. The industry provides employment to over 1,25,000 workers. The total investment in the industry is of the order of Rs. 400 crores.

Statement listing steps taken by Government to protect the Jute Industry

Government have recently provided several reliefs and incentives to jute industry. These are:

(i) Duty free import of raw jute against export of jute goods under the advance licencing scheme from April 1989 onward in order to make our jute goods internationally competitive.

(ii) Waiver of customs duty on import of a number of jute machi-